

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3608

INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

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CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, BG

SUBJ: SIX MINISTERS, THREE STATE MINISTERS RESIGN

REF: DACCA 2990

1. ON JULY 7, SIX MINISTERS AND THREE MINISTERS OF STATE RESIGNED FROM THE BDG, THE FIRST OF THE RUMORED CHANGES IN MUJIB'S GOVERNMENT TO OCCUR (REFTEL). THE SIX MINISTERS ARE SHEIKH ABDUL AZIZ, POSTS, TELEPHONES AND TELEGRAPHS; SHAMSUL HUQ, JUTE; MOLLAH JALALUDDIN, LAND REFORM; MATIUR RAHMAN, COOPERATIVES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT; GENERAL OSMANY, SHIPPING AND AVIATION; AND MOFIZ CHOUDHURY, NATURAL RESOURCES. THE MINISTERS OF STATE ARE AMIRUL ISLAM, FOOD; BEGUM NURJAHAN MURSHED, SOCIAL WELFARE AND FAMILY PLANNING; AND ABDUL MALEK KHAN, SMALL INDUSTRIES. THE BRIEF GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT GAVE NO EXPLANATION FOR THE RESIGNATIONS. WITH THE RECENT DEATHS OF LABOR MINISTER ZAHUR AHMED CHOUDHURY AND STATE EDUCATION MINISTER BADRUNESSA AHMED, THE CABINET STANDS FOR THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MOMENT AT 13 MINISTERS AND 10 STATE MINISTERS.

2. THERE IS AS YET NO DISCERNIBLE PATTERN TO THE RESIGNATIONS. SHAMSUL HUQ AND MOLLAH JALALUDDIN WERE DROPPED FROM MUJIB'S FIRST CABINET AND REINSTATED IN DECEMBER 1973. ABDUL AZIZ HAS PROGRESSIVELY BEEN DEMOTED, MOVING FROM AGRICULTURE TO INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING TO PT AND T. GENERAL OSMANY HAS BEEN IN ILL HEALTH FOR SEVERAL MONTHS AND FREQUENTLY RUMORED TO BE RESIGNING. EARLIER REPORTS SAID MUJIB WAS GOING TO FIRE MATIUR RAHMAN FOR CORRUPTION. THE REMOVAL OF MOFIZ CHOUDHURY, AN ENGINEER, RUNS COUNTER TO SOME SPECULATION THAT MUJIB IS PLANNING TO MAKE ROOM IN HIS GOVERNMENT FOR MORE TECHNICALLY COMPETENT PEOPLE.

3. GIVEN THE SPATE OF RUMORS CURRENT IN RECENT DAYS, THIS SHAKEUP HAS A SLIGHTLY ANTI-CLIMACTIC AIR ABOUT IT. NEVERHTELESS, IT IS A MAJOR SHAKEUP, AND THE FIRST SUCH IN THE BDG'S TWO AND ONE-HALF YEARS OF LIFE, AND THUS IS A SUBSTANTIAL DEVELOPMENT. WHETHER OR HOW MUJIB PLANS TO FILL THE VACANT POSTS OR TO RESTRUCTURE HIS GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE KNOWN IN THE NEAR FUTURE. FURTHER RESIGNATIONS OR A MORE FUNDAMENTAL RESTRUCTURING OF THE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT ARE STILL POSSIBLE. THE MUCH-HERALDED JOINT MEETING OF THE AWAMI LEAGUE'S ORGANIZING COMMITTEE AND THE PARLIAMENTARY PARTY TOOK PLACE ON JULY 6 BUT ITS SOLE ANNOUNCED RESULT WAS A RHETORIC-LADEN CALL FOR LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE DRACONIAN PUNISHMENT FOR A VARIETY OF ANTI-SOCIAL ACTS.
FULLER

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